



Vanquishing the V/PD

4th Quarter 2009

A quarterly publication from the
Safety Section

Federal Aviation Administration Airports Division
Western-Pacific Region



This publication is primarily directed towards airport management to be disseminated to all levels of personnel working at your airfield. It does not matter how large or how small your airfield or how tight your budget may be, this information must be made available to your people by whatever means. Vanquishing the V/PD can be accomplished through a solid partnership between the FAA and airport management. The responsibility of making sure that the proper safeguards are in place; however, lies squarely on the shoulders of the airport management. Please use this information and all that follows as a guide by which to produce a safer environment at your airfield.

Recently, at a very busy airport certificated under 14 CFR Part 139, the Air Traffic Control Tower (ATCT) observed a vehicle diving down an active taxiway with no ATCT clearance. The vehicle drove behind a Cessna Citation and a Boeing 737. A pilot was heard on the ATCT frequency announcing that a dog was loose in the area where the vehicle was driving. The ATCT Supervisor then observed a pedestrian exit the vehicle in

an attempt to secure the frightened animal. Airfield Operations was called, the dog was captured and the vehicle was escorted out of the movement area. The driver (an airport tenant) stated that he knew that “he was committing an ATC violation”.

So often we hear of the concerned tenant who, without an ATCT clearance, drives a vehicle into the movement area to retrieve a wayward pet. Or perhaps we hear of the well intentioned mechanic who, without contacting the ATCT, drives a vehicle into the movement area to warn a pilot that a baggage door is ajar. What these individuals do not know is that a quick cell phone call to either the air traffic control tower (ATCT) or airfield operations will remedy the problem quicker and safer than driving into the movement area without an ATCT clearance. Cell phones are an integral part of modern day living. They are quick and direct-almost as quick and direct as a VHF communications radio. If you are an airport tenant or if your place of business is the airport, take a little time to program the telephone numbers of the control tower, airfield operations and the airport manager into your cell phone. If a situation arises where you feel it necessary to break the rules to accomplish a greater goal, call the professionals first. If a cell phone call is made first, the ATCT may clear your vehicle into movement area provided you maintain two-way communications with the tower via cell phone. If you call Airfield operations first, they will most likely allow you to ride in their vehicle as they address your concern. Remember that your private vehicle has no markings, has no lights, has no radio and the tower has no idea what to expect from your actions. A cell phone call to either the ATCT, Airfield Operations or the Airport Manager will solve your problem far more quickly, safely and efficiently than taking matters into your own hands.

Column written by:

Steven Oetzell

Airports Certification/Safety Inspector, AWP-620.6

Reproductions of this, past and subsequent issues of Vanquishing the VPD are available on FAAWebsite:

<http://www.faa.gov/airports/western%5Fpacific/airports%5Fresources/newsletter/>